

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending. Claim 1 is amended hereby.

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 1 is amended to clarify the different tensions being applied. Namely, a first tension is applied after the laminate has passed through the metal rolls. Greater tension is applied to the laminate during the delamination. Because the flexible laminate substrate experiences high tension which would result in improper appearance and dimensional stability of the flexible laminate substrate, the present invention regulates tension on the laminate immediately after thermal lamination as well as when the protective film is being delaminated. The present inventors discovered that the flexible laminate substrate can be manufactured with improved appearance and dimensional stability by applying a second tension during delamination which is greater than a first tension after the laminate has passed between the metal rolls. See, for example, the paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10 of the specification. Please also note the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13 of the specification which indicates that the tension refers to the MD direction.

Claims 1-3, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hase et al. in view of newly applied Fukada. Furthermore, claim 4 was rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hase et al. and Fukada further in view of Yamamoto et al. Favorable reconsideration of these rejections is earnestly solicited.

As correctly acknowledged by the Examiner, Hase et al. does not disclose applying a greater tension to the laminate during the delamination than after passage between the metal rolls. However, based on the description that “the tension that acts on the thermal fusible laminating materials before being laminated by the thermal-press forming device is preferably the minimum for the laminating materials to stably proceed straight ahead,” the Examiner contends that tension of the laminate after the passage between the metal rolls is close to the minimum, thereby rendering it obvious to cause the tension of the laminate during the delamination of the protective film to be higher.

However, Hase et al. does not provide any teaching or suggestion of making a difference in tension anywhere. In other words, Hase et al. may mention tension before being laminated, Hase et al. fails to teach or suggest anything with respect to applying a greater tension during the delamination than the tension which is applied after the laminate has passed between the metal rolls.

Fukada would not have motivated one of ordinary skill in the art to make the modifications of Hase et al. asserted by the Examiner. Fukada discloses an upstream brake roller that opposes a downstream driven roller. The disclosure of Fukada highlighted by the Examiner, however, would not have suggested to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Hase et al. such that a greater tension is applied during delamination than a tension which is applied after the laminate has passed between the metal rolls for thermally laminating.

Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to look to the teachings of Fukada. Fukada is directed to the art of

manufacturing labels wherein an upper layer is adhered to a substrate by an adhesive. Hase et al., on the other hand, is directed to a method for producing a laminate suitable for a flexible circuit board, i.e., a laminate wherein metallic foils are bonded. Accordingly, Fukada belongs to a technical field greatly different from that of Hase et al. As such, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have looked to the teachings of Fukada with a reasonable expectation of success. Even if one of ordinary skill would consider looking to the teachings of Fukada, Fukada would not have motivated one of ordinary skill in the art to make the modifications suggested by the Examiner.

Yamamoto et al. fails to provide the teachings which Hase et al. and Fukada lack.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited art and defines patentable subject matter. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by applicants would be desirable to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned attorney.

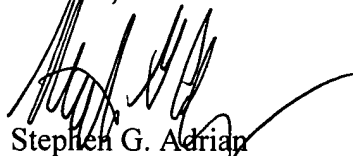
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Art Unit: 4191

Amendment
Attorney Docket No.: 062688

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen G. Adrian", is written over the printed name.

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